

Defence

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

27 October 1983

cc Sir A Parsons
Mr Sherbourne ✓

8 27/10

THE 'PEACE' MOVEMENT

Although the organisers of last Saturday's CND demonstration will be satisfied with the event itself - the largest numbers of marchers ever - and the evidence it offered that the 'peace' movement remains alive and kicking, it did not clarify any of CND's more fundamental problems.

The disarmers lost the public debate at the general election, and they will be unable to "Stop Cruise". The questions they face are what do they do now, how do they maintain the unity and commitment of their broad alliance, and how do they turn public opinion round, having seen much of the wider sympathy they built up between 1980 and 1982 evaporate?

The fact is that they have no clear or agreed strategy and while that is the case they are likely to remain a potentially less potent threat than they were a year ago. Their main hope for winning a new wave of popular support would seem to rest in some shift in public sentiment which might result from a deterioration in the international situation, post-Cruise deployment, or in the Middle East or elsewhere. Politically CND looks weaker now that the prospect of a disarming government has been pushed back to the end of the decade. And the uncompromising unilateralists on the Labour left and in CND itself have been disturbed by the smell of fudge coming to the boil: CND leaders like Ruddock and Kent are themselves talking about a 'nuclear freeze' rather than instant unilateralism. And far fewer Labour and union leaders spoke at Saturday's rally than on previous occasions, even though Mr Kinnock appeared.

In the short-term there will be some pressure from within CND for militant action to impede the deployment of Cruise. Mrs Ruddock has since last weekend re-iterated the CND policy of 'non-violent direct action', such as sitting in the roads in and around missile sites. There is however a minority who want

to take more aggressive steps; these people include the anarchists and punks who demonstrated in the City a few weeks ago and who attempted to shout down Mr Kinnock in Hyde Park. If they are serious they may cause a security and policing problem, but the political effect of any violence would be to divide the peace movement and discredit it in the eyes of the public.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Shipley', written in a cursive style.

PETER SHIPLEY